

friends, at least against this very exhilarating but very poisonous atmosphere. We have little hope of helping one who has long breathed this air; like the old toper, he is very hard to cure; but young people can surely be on their guard. Advisedly have we called it a poisonous atmosphere. It seems to contain oxygen, but it really is largely made up of carbonic acid gas. It distorts the judgment. People are esteemed for the amount of flattery they are able to administer. A plain-spoken or reticent friend is regarded with suspicion if not dislike. It renders the moral cuticle ridiculously sensitive. An adverse breath of dispraise puts the man who breathes this air out of all conceit with the world. He is continually listening for words of flattery, and fishing for compliments; continually comparing the present with the past, and measuring every act by the applause it receives, instead of pressing on to the worthiest ideal. It is a species of intoxication which weakens the moral fiber, and constantly requires more copious draughts of poison to satisfy the toper. The man who lives on the praise of others can always get all he wants; people soon find out what he likes, and for the mere sake of keeping on good terms with him deal out an unceasing supply of flattery. They know that if the supply fails they will be rated considerably lower than A. No. 1 in their friend's books. At length the man who lives on the breath of praise loses all sense of proportion; is unable to tell whether or not he has done a thing well, listens for the *claque* after every word or act, instead of listening for the still small voice of God's approval; and he often becomes the tool of designing men; often suffers tortures, not for wrong-doing, but for the lack of his accustomed tittle, and sooner or later becomes a laughing-stock to his enemies and a mortification to his friends. The apostle has a good word of advice for all flattery-breathers: "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."—Golden Rule.

Concerning Amusements.

What should be the attitude of the Christian church toward amusements? This question has been discussed in the pulpit and press as well as in private circles a great deal for years; and yet there is much need of continuing the discussion, because it is a question which seriously affects the practice of our churches. It cannot be denied that the practice of card-playing, pool-playing and dancing, is on the increase among church members. This is true of churches which belonged to certain denominations that years ago were rigidly opposed to such things. This is more particularly true of card-playing and dancing,—at least, it would seem to be so, from certain indications. How extensively true it is we are not in a position to judge. Now we are quite familiar with the stock-exchanges and arguments which all who engage in these amusements make in defense of the practice.

The whole history of card-playing is blackened with moral evil. It is a favorite pastime with the great mass of criminals of all sorts. It is and ever has been the chief instrument of the gambler's vocation and is considered a necessary part of his outfit.

And besides all this the associations into which the practice of card-playing is very apt to lead one, is one of the worst features of the case. There are doubtless some Christians who can play cards in their own families and can so control themselves that they will never allow themselves to play with any but the better class of people, and even then, without going to excess. But this cannot be said of many young Christians, who are easily influenced, and are frequently induced to mingle with those whose society is harmful to their spiritual interests, just for the sake of gratifying their growing passion for the game. And then there are not a few instances where young members of churches have been so infatuated with this amusement they have attended a card party instead of their church prayer meeting held on the same evening; and here is where the sin and evil of the thing appears. It matters not what the amusement may be—if one pursue it to the neglect of his Christian and church duties it is a positive sin and a downright damage to his spirituality.

As to dancing the same objections may be urged against it and even greater ones. Carried on, as it often is, it is detrimental to the physical well-being of the individual, to say nothing of the moral aspects of the case. Now, it is a well known and indisputable fact that, as a rule, those church members who indulge in those amusements referred to are far from being strong in Christian life and character. They are not the ones who are

spiritual leaders of the churches. They are not earnest in prayer, and deeply consecrated to the cause of Christ. In the very nature of things they cannot be, so long as they are wedded to those amusements which invite them away from the throne of grace and Christian service. Hence, we say that the attitude of our churches,—that is, those members of them whose character and influence entitles them to be leaders,—should be strenuously opposed to those amusements which tend to corrupt both church and society. Our pastors should use their influence in this direction.—*Religious Herald*.

The Cross of Christ!

To St. Paul Christ crucified was the lesson of all lessons; it gathered and absorbed into itself all other truths; it was the power and it was the wisdom of God * * * Do we marvel that St. Paul determined to know nothing among his converts but Christ crucified; that to him the cross embodied all the lessons and concentrated all the sanctions of the moral and spiritual life; that this weak and foolish thing stood out before his eyes as the very power and the very wisdom of God? In this one transcendent manifestation of God's purpose righteousness was vindicated, and love was assured, and ownership was sealed, and obedience was made absolute * * * It is the infinity of the price paid for our redemption which is its essential characteristic. It is the fact that God gave, not a life like our lives, not a weak, erring, sin-stricken, sorrow-laden victim like ourselves, but gave His only begotten Son, gave His eternal Word, to become flesh, to work and to suffer, to live and to die for our sakes. It is the fact that the glory of the invisible God condescended to visit this earth, to hunger and to thirst, to be despised, to be buffeted, to be racked and mangled on the cross. The sacrifice was unique, because the person was unique. Hencein was love—not that we loved Him—did we not spurn Him, did we not hate Him, did we not defy Him?—but that he loved us. * * * To hear some men talk, one would suppose that the cross was a clever expedient for securing the favor of God, without requiring the obedience of man. They lay much stress on the one statement, "Ye are bought with a price;" they altogether overlook the other, which is its practical corollary, "Ye are not your own." They forget that if we were purchased into freedom we were purchased into slavery also. And so by the violence of a spurious theology, faith and conduct, religion and morality, have been divorced; those whom God joined together man has dared to put asunder; the moral sense has been encouraged by the severance, and the cross of Christ needlessly made a scandal to many. What, think you, would St. Paul have said to this interpretation of his doctrine—St. Paul, to whom faith in the cross of Christ meant the recognition of his sole ownership, meant entire submission, obedience, slavery to Him, meant the subjection of every thought, word, and deed to his will? * * * Follow cheerfully whithersoever he may take you. Your cross will be your consolation; your trial will be your glory. The Lord is your shepherd, therefore you shall lack nothing. He shall lead you forth by the waters of comfort. Though you walk through the valley of the shadow of death you will fear no evil; for He is with you; His rod and His staff shall comfort you.—*Lightfoot*.

Free From Sin.

"So then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

Is this the language of a converted man, or of an unsaved sinner? But *sin that dwelleth* in one. Paul evidently recognizes the fact that the sin he spoke of was no temporary visitor, but was an established inmate: dweller within. We all, doubtless understand the words *dwelleth* and *abideth* to be synonymous, to mean the same: to stay or remain permanently. "Behold," says David, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Psalms 51: 5.

That Paul was a converted man, at the time he made use of these words, I can not doubt, for in the 15th verse of the same chapter (7th Romans) he declares: "but what I hate that do I," speaking of sin, and surely none but a converted heart can "delight in the law of God," which Paul being able to do yet found himself a prisoner in chains of bondage—entirely unable to do that which he desired to do—but the "evil" which he "hated" and desired not to do, that he performed. In despair he cries out, "O wretched man that I am." Rom. 7: 24. Thank God for the means of deliverance, the precious blood of Christ, the fountain opened in the house of David for sin and uncleanness. And in sight of this glorious truth, Paul cries out in ecstasy: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." How different the language of the

apostle in the next chapter; no longer under bondage, his fetters have fallen off and through Jesus Christ he has been made free from sin. There is now no condemnation resting upon him, "for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death!" Wonderful is the change wrought in his heart, marvelous indeed the change in his experience. "Therefore if any man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creature. Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." 2 Cor. 5: 17.

Dear sisters and brethren, let us strive to become earnest Bible students, and each day of our life endeavor to do something by which the knowledge of the gospel of Christ may be increased. Praise God for the promise, that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." John 1: 9.

MRS. L. MASTERS.

Updegraff, Ia.

Who Shall Be Saved?

Who shall be saved? Those who work out their own salvation with fear and trembling; who live in the world without indulging in its vices. Who shall be saved? That Christian woman, who, shut up in the circle of her domestic duties, rears up her children in faith and in piety; divides her heart only between her Savior and her husband; is adorned with delicacy and modesty; sits not down in the assemblies of vanity; makes not a law of the ridiculous customs of the world, but regulates those customs by the law of God; and makes virtue appear more amiable by her rank and example. Who shall be saved? That believer, who, in the relaxation of modern times, imitates the manners of the first Christians—whose hands are clean and his heart pure—who is watchful—who hath not lifted up his soul to vanity; but who, in the midst of the dangers of the great world, continually applies himself to purify it; just who swears not deceitfully against his neighbor, nor is indebted to fraudulent ways for the innocent aggrandizement of his fortune; generous, who with benefits repays the enemy who sought his ruin; sincere—who sacrifices not the truth to a vile interest, and knows not the part of rendering himself agreeable by betraying his conscience; charitable—who makes his house and interest the refuge of his fellow creatures, and himself the consolation of the afflicted; regards his wealth as the property of the poor; humble in ambition—a Christian. Who will merit such a reward? dear hearers, if you will follow these examples, for such are the souls to be saved.—*John Baptiste Massillon, 1662-1742*.

Prayer Meeting Resolutions.

1. I will make it a matter of conscience to attend. "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together."
3. I will endeavor to bring others. "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good."
3. As I enter the room I will ask the Savior's presence. "We would see Jesus."
4. I will not choose a back seat. "How pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."
5. I will not so seat myself as to keep others from the same pew. "Be courteous."
6. I will fix my attention upon worship and the Word. "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, but their heart is far from Me."
7. I will lead in prayer. "Ye also helping together by praying for us."
8. I will otherwise take part. "Teaching and admonishing one another." "Confess your faults one to another."
9. My prayers and my remarks shall be brief. "For God is in heaven and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few."
10. I will avoid critical thoughts of others who take part. "Judge not."
11. After meeting I will greet as many as I courteously can. "Salute one another." "Be kindly affectioned."
12. As I return home I will maintain a devout mind. "Continuing instant in prayer."
13. By Christ's grace dwelling in me, I will daily live as I pray. "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, but he that doeth the will of my father."—*Golden Censer*.

Faith in Christ is the great characteristic of a saint, and the want of it, of a sinner. This makes a mighty difference in their character, condition and prospects. Though they live in the same family, work in the same field, or sleep in the same bed, one believing Christ is to follow his directions and be saved, the other, not believing, neglects his directions and is lost.